A CHRISTMAS CHOICE.

WRITTEN FOR THE EVENING TAR BY MARTHA McCULLOCH-

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ward 4 o'clock of Christmas eve. The morning had been April weather, full of fitful sunshine and sofi, flawy winds. Now the sky was leaden, the wind sat northwest; lower, ragged clouds seudding before it let fall little spitful snow spas, or dashes of hall.

The Murray outfit came wabbling up. There was a sort of tremolo even to the loud crackings of Sonny's whip. Lassaphine, at Sonny's eibow, seowled and shavered impatiently at the noise. Such useless noise! The crack of doom could not have quickened the patient amble at which Brandy, the red ox, and Jinny, the pate little donkey, drew their clattering load.

"By gonnys! Must be you've fetched a feather bed alive!" Storekeeper Walker said, holding out both hands. Lassaphine overlooked them. Instead of getting out, she writhed down amid the turkeys. They were fine, big fellows, white, and copperas yellow, and glossy greenish bronze. She had fed and tended and talked to them since they came out of the erg. A lump had come in her throat as she hoppied them in pairs and laid them upon the scant straw at the bottom of the wagon. The lump was there still, though Lassaphine was very far from a sentimental person. She could have sold her flock to the turkey drover last week with the lightest heart in the world. from a sentimental person. She could have sold her flock to the turkey drover last week with the lightest heart in the world. It was quite another matter to seize and bind them treacherously as they fed from her hand, and deliver them thus to make sport for an idle holiday crowd.
"Sa-ay, Jim Walker! Ain't you got a new

frock and stick er red-strip-ed candy? They mought tole this yer gal er mine inside!" Sonny said, stamping his feet hard as he clambered down. "She wants ter spile our fun-Lassaphine does-been a-beggin' me all the way not to have the turkey walkthough she knows I saved them bur-reds jest fer nothing eise in the world."
"Come, now, Miss Lassaphine! That
won't do! Not never in the world!" Walker

"Christmas comes but once a year, know, Come in! Do! I've got the dress for you-told my wife so last right, when the newest goods come in. Lassaphine shook her head decidedly. "I

Ef you don't wanter trade, though, lemme take you up to the house."
"I don't leave this wagin till it starts

take you up to the house—"

"I don't leave this wagin till it starts for home." Lassaphine interrupted, turning to pick up the rope reins her father had dropped. He had vanished inside the log storehouse. As the team crawled a little from the steps to make room for a smart new buggy he came out wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, his eyes glassy with satisfaction.

"So you ra'ly did come, Jack! Good boy! Man of his word!" he shouted to the buggy's driver. Lassaphine did not turn her head, yet a slow blush gathered in her olive.

"Lassaphine—like the rest of us." Len metals and the starts of the could shut them and go straight to the goal without turning a hair.

"Teny'll feel like a sport after this—he's always been sech er plous little cuss," Doc Grant said. Haskell nodded. "But he'll be in at the turkey supper, large as life," he said. "You must remember it's a developing process—failing in love with Lassaphine," Jack Childers added. "But say! Look yonder! There comes the preacher, as I'm a livin sinner! I wonder what he's after!"

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gy's driver. Lassaphine did not turn her head, yet a slow blush gathered in her olive checks. She had long dusky eyes with a spark at the bottom, heavy night-black hair and the poise and stature of a Greek goddess. Notwithstanding most women in the countryside reckoned her ugly. She

than poverty, the bare and unmerchantable
fragment of a wide plantation. Its starveling acres were either gailed and guilled or
overgrown with vagrant briers, and the big overgrown with vagrant briers, and the big weather-stained house was ruinous except in two or three south-looking rooms.

Still the Murrays managed to five by it— Lassaphine and Sonny and grandpap. Grandpap never forgot, nor allowed the others to forget, what was due to Murray blood. Lassaphine, for example, must learn to read and sign her name, must wear shoes upon high days and hadden. shoes upon high days and holidays and go to church at least once a month. He was the more strenuous because Lassaphine's mother had not been a person of quality, but a hill girl, who had, however, been obliging enough to die while Lassaphine

was yet in arms.
"Drive round! We're a-goin' to walk in
the back lot." Sonny called, shaking hands
right and left as he spoke. All Lassaphine's worshipers were in the crowd on
the porch-besides everybody liked Sonny
in spite of his weakness for many glasses in spite of his weakness for many glasses when one was too much for his poor head.

That was the secret of Lassaphine's presence—she could not afford to have him royster away the price of her feathered flock. For one thing, there were her church dues. Sonny argued that the circuit rider, a wifeless young fellow, well clothed, well mounted, at no expense for living, had much less need of the 35 than themselves.

Lassaphine listened, smiling obstinately. She could put in action, not in words, her feeling that it was due herself to pay, tegardless of anything else.

The was the secret of Lassaphine waved him came a little short. Lassaphine waved him toward the gate. As he turned his horse's head, she laughed defiantly, and patted Sonny's arm. "Oh, I wish I was a man, and he not a preacher," she said, then raising her voice a little, "Come on, everybody! After this, I'll hold pegs—and Sonny may have fun with the rest of you."

The walking went on with a rush. Though there were but seventeen turkeys, Lassaphine somehow found herself at the end possessed of \$25. It was almost dark, the rush of the property of the second possessed of \$25. It was almost dark, and property in the second possessed of \$25. It was almost dark, and property in the property of the property of the second possessed of \$25. It was almost dark, and property of the proper

gardless of anything else.

A turkey walk understand, is a sort of chance in it. Each walker pays a stipulated sum for the privileze of walking—in local parlance, "buys his reg." After it is bought he must walk blindfolded a given number of stens and set the peg firmly in the ground. He who comes nearest to the stake wins the turkey, or whatever the parts may be Community ton or a 40zen. stake wins the turkey, or whatever the prize may be. Commonly ten or a dozen live birds are walked off. The witners are rarely thrifty enough to take home their live prizes. Instead they hand them over to a negro cook who serves them up at a turkey supper toward 1 o'clock on Christmas morning. By the time the supper is enter it is time to go out and shoot anyti mas morning. By the time the supper is eaten it is time to go out and shoot anvit Christmas guns, or touch off hollow logs. plugged, with a pound of powder inside.

The lack lot was an acre of rough turf, stretching between the span-new Walker house, brave in gaudy paint, and the squat weathered store, nestling in the angle of house, brave in gandy paint, and the squat weathered store, nestling in the angle of the cross-ronds. Half way in it a stort stake had been driven. A pile of roughly whittled pegs by beside the store's back steps. As Sonny came down them with three parts of the crowd at his heels, he stooped and gathered the pile under his arm, saving, with a mild presence of the arm, saying, with a mild pretense of mis trust: "Ye ve all got so much Christmas in yer bones, consarn yer pictvers, ye're as full of tricks as so many unbroke mules—but I lay the best gobbler in the bunch ye don't play none of 'em on me."
"Sonny, you shorely don't think they'd try it, with Lassaphine a-lookin' at 'em?" the storekeeper called after him from the door. Len Haskell shied a stone at Walker, lack Childers contented himself with a

door. Len Hackell shied a stone at Walker.
Jack Childers contented himself with a
shake of the fist. Doe Grant made a motion
toward his hip pocket, but dropped his
hand and looked at Lassaphine, with: "I'll
do it—honest fnjun, I will—if you say so."
Lassaphine did not smile—she was busy
with the turkeys, which had set up a pitifal fluttering and peculing. Sonny lifted

less." Doc Grant said, loudly, fingling a handful of loose silver.
"I say two—" Jack Childers begun. Len Haskell stopped him with a significant touch. "Let it go at one," he said under his breath. "It hurts her—Lassaphine, you know—to take even that much. She hates bein' here, but she cain't well help it."
"No plottin' ag'in the whites here!" Grant o plottin' ag'in the whites here" Grant said, jocularly, setting his younger rivals | marked their name on the bundle- stealing

The crowd in the store overflowed upon the porch, but there was a luft in trade—a surprising bill, considering it was well to-surprising bill, considering the surprising bill, considering The crowd in the store overflowed upon arms-length apart. Teeny Walker darted up to them "Some or you all he market

his chin. "Here, you nice young men, put on this same rag and let's see if you do any better, with no eyes in your head!" "One thing sure-we can't do any worse!"

"One thing sure—we can't do any worse!" Jack retorted, as Sonny hooded Haskell and turned him about. Haskell had an Indian's sense of direction along with a hunter's trained perception. He wheeled slowby until he felt the wind cut his left cheek, and then with a confident smile went straight toward the stake and set his peg within a yard of it.
"Good for Len! Well walked! Sure shot!"

"Good for Len! Well walked! Sure shot!"
the others called.
"That's Len's turkey, dead to rights!"
Jack Childers said. "We couldn't beat that
if we tried a year. Put up another turkey,
Sonny, and bar Len from walking."
"Good as wheat!" from the crowd. Len
smiled quite happily. "It jest gives me a
better chance ter see Lassaphine," he said
to Childers. "I'll walk, though, fer the next
-then you lookout." then you lookout."
"Here goes for Teeny Walker!" Jack said,

don't want no dress you got," she said, "Nothin' you've got—until the money to pay for it is in my hand."
"That won't be long," Walker said, rubbing his hands. "Look at all them fine gobblers! I call it jest a great notion of your pa's—havin' 'em walked for—stand you in twice what the drovers 's been payin'! Ef you don't wanter trade, though, lemme the stake to the properties of the wing post. One luckless fellow brought up at the store steps—the rest scattered impartially about, though each had been morally earlied the store steps—the rest scattered impartially about, though each had been morally earlied the store steps—the rest scattered impartially about, though each had been morally earlied the store steps—the rest scattered impartially about, though each had been morally earlied the store steps—the rest scattered impartially about, though each had been morally earlied the stake. The other nine walkers went wild—not a one came within five yeards of the winning post. One luckless fellow brought up at the store steps—the rest scattered impartially about, though each had been morally each the stake. tially about, though each had been morally certain with his eyes open that he could

goddess. Notwithstanding most women in the countryside reckoned her ugly. She was so unlike their standard of pink and white prettiness, they could not in the least comprehend why so many men of so many minds and fortunes lost their heads over her.

Jack Childers, for instance, a congressman's son, rich and fair looking, though reputed wild; Len Harkell, most driving and thriving of the young farmers round.

own to settle to have so many dangle after Lassaphine, who coquetted with all and fa-vored none. The Murray place was poorer

gaged in a gambling scheme."
"Gamblin'?" Sonny's jaw dropped, his hands fell to his sides, nerveless and flactid. "Gamblin'!" he repeated. "I never gambled in my life! I don't know what you meen."

"I do know-it's walkin' for our turkeys," Lassaphine said, springing down, and standing at her father's side. Her head

was high, her eyes darted lightning, a royal color burned in her cheeks. She looked Micklejohn full in the eye-his glance feli before hers. "Where are your wings?" she asked with a little sacering laugh. "You a mere man. Understand, though, this is my turkey walk. I raised the turkeys; Sonby s jest managin' things to save me trou-ble. I'm a probationer, not a full member of your church—I won't ever be anything more. Take my name off your books—at once! Do you hear?"

end possessed of \$25. It was almost dark but she went into the store, Jingling the rural lottery, much affected around holl-days in the middle south. As a lottery it comes under the ban of strict church peo-ple. Certainly there is a strong element of chance in it. Each walker pays a stipu-lated sum for the view of the results of the strong per strong pays a stipu-lated sum for the results of the r her in the face of all those others. Jack Childers at once flung over the counter in-to his vacant place, and certainly sold Lassaphine some astonishing bargains from the best in stock. She made no demursince her encounter with Micklejohn she had a royal recklessness in everything. Before she had flouted the most trifling gifts. Now she took with a free hand whatever her wooers chose to offer, thereby greatly scandalizing the few other women making belated Christmas purchases.

"Let me take you home?" Jack said, looking up into her brilliant face when the buying was done. Jack was fair and blue-eyed, and half a head the lower. She smiled down at him and stepped. eyed, and nail a nead the lower. She smin-ed down at him, and stepped toward the door. Outside there was black darkness-she could not make out even Jinny's pale-ness against the red of brandy. Sonny, whom Grant and Haskell had managed to keep miraculously sober for Christmas eve, was already in his seat, propped all about with parcels. "No-I'll go as I came-in my own private carriage," she called over her shoulder. "I don't want to spoil sport. Be sure, you—all, to come tell me how the surkey supper went off."

surkey supper went off."
"Tell you what, she's got grit—that girl has!" Walker said, sticking his hands in his pocket by way of emphasizing his first leisure since sunrise. "She ain't afraid of nothin' in this world ner the next."
"We found that out several hours back," Jack said—and Walker could not understand why the others laughed so heartily. Christmas dawned properly clear and cold, with a powdering of fine light snow over with a powdering of fine light snow over everything. By 12 o'clock it had melted except where it lay in shadow. The road was moist, not wet from it, yet Lassaphine held her skiris high above it. She sang in a with the turkeys, which had set up a pitiful flattering and peeping. Sonny lifted
out a big bronzy fellow, swung him back
and forth, head downward, once or twice,
and said almost shamefacedly, "How much
is he worth, boys? Would you say nowhalf a dollar".

"A whole dollar—not a feather goes for
less." Doc Grant said, loudly, fingling a
handful of loose silver.

"I say two—" Jack Childers begun. Len
Haskell stopped him with a significant
touch "Let it go at one" he said under gay loud voice as she walked, and now and then made a dancing step. Until now she had never in her life made a Christmas progenitor. Len would sigh thriftily over the waste of his money; Jack—Jack would laugh with her and think it a fine Christ-

The Rouses should never know. She had

mas prank.

in, she would knock, drop it and run away. Their house sat almost flush with the road which a little later plunged downhill into a dark and threatening gorge. Either side the hills, precipices almost, crowded in so close a resolute man might dispute another's passage. Lassaphine hated the gorge. She passed through it whenever she went to her favorite church, Sharon. Brother Micklejohn preached there today. The Rouse tribe were likely to go and hear close a resolute man might dispute another's passage. Lassaphine hated the gorge. She passed through it whenever she went to her favorite church, Sharon. Brother Micklejohn preached there today. The Rouse tribe were likely to go and hear the heart to be seen that the state of t him. Lassaphine herself had meant to be there—also to fetch the minister home with her, to share her Christmas dinner. "Let the Rouses have him—with the rest," she thought, touching the bundle of which her the control of the contro arm wa. growing weary. She heard hoofs upon the road behind, and slipped within a roadside cedar clump to rest. She was hardly well hidden before three riders halted just in front of her, spoke briefly together, then rode furlously away down hill.

Brother Mickeltohn had prayed with fervor and preached with unction, yet his heart was heavy as he rode away from Sharon. Against hope, against reason, he had hoped to see Lassaphine. He loved his Master and his Master's work, yet he was barely twenty-three, with veins riotously full of young red blood. From the first he felt Lassaphine's spell. A brief while he had fought against it—then he surrendered everything but conscience to its subtle sweetness. It was conscience which had made him eners here, he was jealously made him anger her; he was jealously afraid of his own heart. Another man, in Sonny's case, would have been privately told of his unseemly behavior. Love and Lassaphine had constrained him to deal harshly, upon pain of seeming to himself a coward.

She must be furiously angry-still he would not give her up-he would go to her, and somehow make his peace. He rode with eyes downcast, reins hanging. His horse, all at once, shied violently, then stood stock still. A glance told him the reason—three other horsemen so aligned as to block the way. Jack Childers was in the middle, Grant and Haskell to right and laft. All three focus wars not sort in sort of left. All three faces were set in a sort of steely whiteness. Instinctively Micklejohn understood, and in understanding comprehended how much he had mistaken his vocation. The elemental savage woke in him-love, religion, honor, ambition, were as nothing by contrast with this lust for a weapon, this mad desire to fight to the death. He was wholly unarmed, in the face of tremendous odds. He was better horsed than any of the three, and to the full as good a rider. His one chance was to ride them down, and run for it. It was characteristic that the thought of turning back

teristic that the thought of turning back never once entered his mind.

He gathered up his reins, bent his head, whistled softly and spurred straight at the line. Jack swerved his horse the least bit, let the other get his head well past, then leaning lightly tore the reins from Mickle-john's grasp and threw his horse upon its haunches. The force of impact swung his own horse around—in an instant, both animals had fallen. The riders, at hard grips, writhed free of the struggling beasts, sizgwrithed free of the struggling beasts, staggered, swayed back and forth through a breathless heart-breating minute, then fell prone in the rocky road.

Micklejohn stood six feet—he had brawny broad shoulders and loose-jointed, long-reaching arms. But try as he might, he could not free nimself. Jack's arms he could not free nimself. Jack's arms were locked about the big chest like a steel band, momentarily tightening. Not a word had been spoken. None was needed. Micklejohn knew he was paying for what they had taken as an insult to Lassaphine. The knowledge was mere feeling—he The knowledge was mere feeling—he neither thought nor planned consciously. Life meant fighting—nothing more nor less—fighting an antagonist he ought to crush with one arm, who yet seemed likely to

He shut his eyes, but opened them instantly. He could see nothing but rings of red and yellow and green, melting into blackness. Still Jack's grip held, vise-like, agonizing. His breath went no lower than the throat-he must break the grip or per ish. With a mighty plunging surge he got to his knees, loosed one hand, clinched it and struck Childers a blow full in the face. Blood followed it, red blood warm and sticky. It came in a trickling jet, but did not dim the fire in Jack's eyes. Still he held hard, swaying baca and forth, foiling Micklejohn's efforts to get upon his feet.

Micklejohn's efforts to get upon his feet. He saw the purple face, the staring eyes—he knew the end was only a minute away. Triumph was in his grasp. Micklejohn had struck him again, a feeble glancing blow. All at once a whirlwind seemed to rage behind him—his arms were torn loose, he was flung violently aside—Lassaphine, her eyes blazing, stamped her foot and cried: "Shame! Shame!! Shame on you!!! After this never call yourselves men!"

"You—don't—think—you can't—we set on him—three to one?" Jack gasped. She nod-ded coldly. "I can't think anything else," she said. "I know well why—because he took it on himself to sass Sonny—and me.

"Dear bless my soul! Is anybody dead or and thriving of the young farmers round about: Doc Grant, the bachelor tobacco dealer, a catch for any girl, to say nothing of Teeny Walker, the storekeeper's bashful young brother. It was certainly aggravating to good women with girls of their own less the playe so grant dearly and strength and will be may have. I could might no matter what I was no doubt of that." Micklejohn of your hand on me, no matter what I was no doubt of that." Micklejohn of your hand on me, no matter what I was no doubt of settle to have so grant dearly and strength and will be may have. I could might do."

"I have no doubt of that." Micklejohn of your hand on me, no matter what I was no doubt of settle to have so grant dearly and strength and will be may have. I could might do."

"No" bekelejohn on matter what I might do."

"No!" Jack said, "nor let anybody else." "Who planned this foolishness first?" asked, still severe. "All of us."

said Haskell laconically. Then we drawed lots-and Jack had luck.
That fellow had to be thrashed-ef he thrashed Jack, then I come into the argyment, and Doc after me."

Lassaphine's face relaxed a little. "You

all go on up to the house and wait," said. "I-I-that is-there's something-I've got a word to say to Brother Mickiejohn." "I'm 'fraid it's 'Yes,'" Doc said gloomily as they mounted and rode away. "Remember how she blushed up, at the last.
Lassaphine ain't like no other woman ever
I saw—but even she's likely to be a fool
over a good lookin' preacher."

over a good lookin' preacher."
"Does look like it," Haskell admitted, with a half sareastic sigh. "Twould be funny now if we'd won the brother's case asked with a little sneering laugh. "You funny now if we'd won the brother's case ought to be an angel-you are too good for for him, instead o' runnin' him out o' the think about it Jack?" "I-O! nothing!" Jack said as though coming out of a dream. "In this matter Lassa-phine must do the thinking."

Sonny and grandpap gave the trio an up-Sonny and grandpap gave the trio an up-roarious welcome, which grew somewhat chastened when ten minutes later Lassa-phine came in with Brother Micklejohn in her wake. "Shake hands—all of you," she commanded, "then wash your hands and faces and come out to Christmas dinner." It was a royal dinner. Black Luce, whose forhears had belonged to the Murrays in forbears had belonged to the Murrays in the days before their decadence, had done her very best-and Sonny had helped her. Sonny had a gourmet's palate and a pretty taste in seasoning. At Christmas neither was ever stinted however bare the living other days of the year. They ate in leisurely fashion-it was quite dusk when they from the table. Lassaphine led the way into grandpap's room, which was bright with leaping firelight. Notwithstanding she lit candles in two tall brass sticks, turned about and faced Mickle-john, who throughout what ought to have been an ordeal had severed en an ordeal had seemed curiously Her face was grave, though a laugh lurked in her eyes. "Brother Micklejohn," she said, "you asked me down in the gorge if "Brother Micklejohn," she

did." Micklejohn said, smiling softly and half extending his hand. Lassaphine's head went up. "You thought wrong," she said. "I did go for love, though—because couldn't bear to have Jack disgrace him-

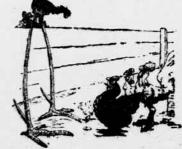
and I said, 'Yes.' Did you think I meant

came there 'because I loved so

'Hurrah!" Haskell shouted, hugging grandpap, who stood next him. "Hurrah!" Grant echoed, trying to shake Jack's hand. Delight in the minister's downfall overbalanced personal loss. Jack stood as though dazed, his hands hanging, his eyes fast on Lassaphine. The cut on his forehead was dazed, his names hanging, his eyes last on Lassaphine. The cut on his forehead was throbbing viciously—he was spent and weak—the flood of joy overwhelmed him. He flung his arms about Lassaphine, and laid head on her shoulder, with a dry, smothered soh. Before them all, she bent and kissed him, then laughed out to the fleeing Micklejohn. "If you've a mind, you fleeing Micklejohn. "If you've a mind, you may come back and marry us-Old Christ-

If you want work read the want columns of The Star.

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"My child! My child! What has happened to you?"
"Why, mother, I stepped in the photog-

POWERFUL BATTLE SHIPS BUILDING

Cruisers Are the Very Best That Can Be Turned Out.

ARMORED AND PROTECTED

Written for The Evening Star.

The development of the new navy of Japan is specially interesting from the viewpoint of the United States, inasmuch as the two countries have always been close friends, and the policy of expansion may lead to international complications which will make the good will of the "England of the Pacific" exceedingly valuable.

No sooner was the conflict with China finished than the mikado's government, awakened to the immense importance of sea power, started in to build ships, appropriating to that purpose the bulk of the war indemnity received from its beaten adversary. Contracts for vessels were awarded to builders in Europe and America, while others were begun in home ports, and," as a result, Japan will soon stand sixth among the nations of the world in respect to fighting strength, or next after the United States. Great Britain comes first, of course, with France, Russia, Italy, Germany, the United States and Japan following in the order given. It may be mentioned incidentally that Germany at present is much stronger on the sea than this country. This year she has doubled the personnel of her navy, and in 1800 she will have no fewer than nineteen battle ships, with a proportionate number of cruisers.

AM Latest Improvements.

The ships of the new Japanese navy, newbuilt or under process of construction, are the very best that can be turned out by the most famous yards-up-to-date in all respects, and provided with every improvement known to the art today. Only a few weeks ago was launched in England the Shikishima, which is perhaps the most powerful fighting machine in the world. This vessel has a displacement of 14,959 tons—nearly 4,000 tons greater than that of the Iowa, which represents our largest type of battle ship. The Sikishima is slight-ly bigger than the Majestic, which is the largest craft in commission in the navy of Great Britain. She is 400 feet long, and has a complete belt of Harveyized steel, very wide but not expedient the inches in very wide, but not exceeding nine inches in thickness. This reduced thickness of armor is in line with the latest ideas on the subject, which are that a thinner belt extended over more of the ship possesses the maximum of advantages.

This monstrous Japanes: battle ship deserves some description in detail, owing to her exceptionally formidable character. She carries four 12-inch breech-loading rifles, which are mounted in barbettes—i. e., turrets that are overlooked by the cannon. She has also fourteen 6-inch rapid-fire guns, eight on the main deck and six on the upper deck; fwenty 12-pounder rapid-fire, and twelve 3-pounder rapid-fire guns. Of her five torpedo tubes, four are submerged. Her complement is 741 officers and men. She will be completed and ready for commission next year. Three other battle ships exactly duplicating the Shikishima are now under construction—one of them at Stettin, the second at Elswick and the third at Clydebenk. the third at Clydebank. ...

Very Powerful Crait.

Great Britain, and especially the yards at Elswick, has secured most of the contracts for the vessels of the new Japanese navy. Two battle ships of 10,000 tons each, as yet unnamed, are about to be built at Elswick. Two others, the Yashima and Fuji, likewise of British construction, are about finished. of British construction, are anout mission.

Both of these last are very powerful craft, with a displacement of 12,450 tons for each. They are very speedy, having attained nineteen knots on their trial trips, and nineteen knots on the trips. their steaming radius is 7,000 miles, ena- school, Mr. J. E. Beard; flower, Miss Grace bling them to travel a distance equal to C. Montgomery; music, Mr. Page L. Zimtwice across the Atlantic without renewing their coal supply. They have two military masts and armor belts 14 to 18 inches thick. Their armament consists of four 12-inch rifles, in barbettes, and 34 rapid-fire guns. Each of them has five torpedo tubes, and a complement of 600. A third sister to the Yashima and Fuji has already been begun. It will be remembered that in the conflict with China, Japan had no battle ships, but she captured one at Wei-Hai-Wei in De-cember, 1895. This vessel, of 7,330 tons, with a 14-inch armor belt, is now called the Chin Yen, and belongs to the mikado's navy. She was built at Stettin in 1882, and is somewhat out of date. Her main bat-tery comprises four 12-inch Krupp rifles, and in her secondary battery are two 6-inch Krupps and ten rapid-fire and ma-chine guns. Her complement is 250 men and officers. Armored Cruisers.

For the Japanese navy are now being built four magnificent armored cruisers of the first class, sister ships of 4,000 tons each, at Elswick, Stettin, Yokosuka (Japan) and St. Nazaire, respectively. Two more just like them are to be constructed right away at Elswick. The Japs captured a very good armored cruiser of the second rate at Wei-Hai-Wei, called the Ping-Yuen. It now sails under the imperial Japanese flag and is named the Hel-Yen. This ves-sel is of 2,600 tons, and has a complete armor belt eight inches thick. She was built at Foochow in 1800, and has a com-plement of 300 men. Her guns are one 10inch Krupp, two 6-inch Krupps and nine rapid-fire cannon. The only other armored cruisers in the Japanese navy are two outof-date ships of 2,250 tons, the Hiyei and Kongo, built in England in 1877, and the Chiyoda, of 2,450 tons, which is a very goods and modern-built vessel, having a speed of nineteen knots and carrying twenty-four round fire generally the Carlying twenty-four rapid-fire guns and three Gattlings.

At Philadelphia and at San Francisco, re spectively, are being constructed two fine spectively, are being constructed two one protected cruisers of the first class—the Kasagl and the Chitose. They will be finished by the first of next year. Each of them is of 4,760 tons and has the great speed of twenty-three knots. They have steel protected decks 4½ inches thick, and cach carries two Sinch rifles one forward. each carries two 8-inch rifles, one forward and one aft, as well as forty-eight rapid-fire and four machine guns, with five torpedo tubes. A third ship of this type is to be built promptly. It will be observed that these are very formidable craft, and that they are provided with a remarkable number of rapid-fire guns. This latter point represents one of the new departures in warships, rapid-fire guas having proved themselves so destructive, by reason of the showers of exploding shells they throw, that more of them are to be fighting vessels in all the great navies.

Sister Ships. The Takasago is another superb firstclass protected crisser, of 4,160 tons, newly completed in England. 19 Another just like her is being built and three more of her sisters are projected. Each of them will carry two 9-inche riffes and twenty-two rapid-fire guns. Contracts for all five bave been secured by the Elswick yards. In addition to these, three second-class pro tected cruisers, of 3,200 tons and twenty knots speed, are being constructed in Ja-pan, as well as two of 2,700 tons, the Suma and Akaski, which have also been begun in nome ports.

Seven protected craisers used by Japan Seven protected craisers used by Japan in the war with China are still in commission in the Japanese mayy. They are all fairly modern, but none of them are up to date. The Naniwa, which played such a conspicuous part in the conflict referred to, was built as long ago as 1885 in England. She has a displacement of 3.700 tons. land. She has a displacement of 3,700 tons, and her armament consists of two 10-inch and her armament consists of two 10-lifen rifles, six 6-linch rifles and sixteen rapid-fire and machine gubs. The Takachiho is sister to the Naniwa. The Matsushima is quite a formidable craft, of 4.277 tons, carquite a formidable craft, of 4.277 tons, carrying one 12-inch rifle and thirty-three rapid-fire and machine guns. The Itsukushima and Hashidate, each of 4.277 tons; the Yoshino, of 4.150 tons, and the Akitsushima, of 3.150 tons, are good boats also. In addition, Japan has the Barrozo, the Idzumi and the Tai-Yen. The last named was formerly the Tsi-Yuen, and was captured at Wei-Hai-Wei. She is of 2,320 tons. The Idzumi was built in 1884 at Elswick

of the vessels composing the sea force of that country complete, save for a few more or less antiquated gunboats and alleged cruisers, which do not amount to much. But from the brief description given it is easy to see that the navy of the mikado will soon be in a condition to be reckoned with very seriously in international affairs.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES

The topic for discussion tomorrow is "How to Enjoy Our Religion." The Rev. Charles M. Sheldon of Topeka, Kan., gives four ways, as follows:

"First. Help others to enjoy the same. If we are joyful over something so wonderful as our Christian salvation, it ought to be shared by others. We cannot really be happy if any one who can be saved by us dies of hunger, without the bread of

"Second. Always carry a clear conscience. A knowledge that we have done the best we could, with Christ's help, always gives us a right to enjoy our religion. "Third. Think more of the future than of the past, more of successes than of failure, more of the Savior than of self. Enjoying our religion is always dependent on a healthful vision of the best thing in the

"Fourth. Believe that God is going to win the victory over the sin of the world. Nothing gives us so much joy as confidence in the n the eternal power of our religious faith. The monthly meeting of the Junior Super-ntendents' Union was held last Monday intendents' Union was held last Monday evening in the parlor of Luther Place Memorial Church, President Butler presiding. The topic for discussion was, "What Special Work is Your Society Doing?" Miss Eaton of the Easton Presbyterian Society led, and many interesting facts regarding junior work were brought out. The invitation of the board of officers of the District Christian Endeavor Union to provide a program for the next meeting of the union. christian Endeavor Union to provide a program for the next meeting of the union was formally accepted, and a committee consisting of Miss Foster, Miss Allison, Mrs. Kimball and the president was appointed to arrange it. Miss Foster was elected to the vacant vice presidency, caused by the resignation of Mrs. C. C. Tucker. It was decided, inasmuch as many junior superintendents find it impossible to attend the meeting of the District union the first the meeting of the District union the first Monday evening, and the junior union Monday evening, and the junior union meeting the second Monday evening of each month, that hereafter the latter union shall hold its meetings the same evening as the former, but one hour earlier. The present officers of the union are: President, Rev. Chas. H. Butler; vice president, Miss Estelle Foster; recording secretary, Miss Amelia Randolph; corresponding secretary, Miss Gertrude Allison, treasurer, Mr. J. W. Bevans. The next meeting will be at 7 o'clock the evening of January 9, and the subject for consideration will be "Graduation of Juniors Into the Young Peo-Graduation of Juniors Into the Young Peo-

ple's Society."

The recent annual election of officers for The recent annual election of officers for Gurley Memorial Y. P. S. C. E. resulted as follows: President, Mr. H. C. Metcalf; vice president, Miss Alice Carpenter; recording secretary, Miss Catherine Roeben; corresponding secretary, Miss Nannie B. Heizer; treasurer, Miss Edith Bartmess; junior superintendent, Miss Gertrude Allison. A public installation of these officers will take place the evening of January 1, 1899. The missionary reading club of this society recently gave a pleasing entertainment, an "African Palaver," to raise funds for the purchase of books for a missionary library. The life of Robert Moffatt was the subject of the "palaver." the subject of the "palaver."
The Third Christian Church is very

much pleased with its Junior Endeavor so-ciety, which now numbers about sixty, and of which Miss Mamie Goodrich is superintendent. Mr. I. J Smith, an active member of Union M. E. Christian Endeavor Society,

was made a local preacher by the last quarterly conference of that church. At a business meeting of the Y. P. S. C. E. of Mt. Vernon Place M. E. Church South, held last Tuesday evening, the following corps of officers and committee chairmen were elected 'President, Mr. W. W. Millan; vice president, S. T. Murray; recording secretary, Mr. Wm. T. Smith; corresponding secretary, Mr. A. L. Dietrich; treasurer, Mr. C. D. Finley; chairmerman; reception, Dr. Henry Knowles good literature, Mr. D. Hugh Reed; Chris tian citizenship, Mr. R. E. L. Smith; de-nominational, Mr. W. W. Millan; whatsoever, Mr. Willis B. Robinson. Duffey, their pastor, will install these persons into their respective offices the even-ing of January I, when their term of office begins. This society is very much pleased with the transfer of the Rev. Charles D. Bulla, one of the former most active members, from the pastorate of Grace Church in Roanoke, Va., to St. Paul's Church in Baltimore, which takes place about the 20th instant.

Collecting Baby Shoes. From the New York World,

Collecting and classifying babies' shoes is the latest fad of New York women. Several collections have recently been made of more than a hundred varieties of shoes. each of which has, of course, its own peculiar history or romance. As with the collection of postage stamps, the canceled or much-used shoes are considered the more valuable or attractive. The field before these collectors is, of course, practically

unlimited. These quaint little collections of secondand baby shoes are usually kept in cabinets, where they are ranged in long rows, each one distinguished by some tag or rip-bon. The most highly prized objects of the baby shoemaker's art are usually the shoes which have been worn by some member of the family. Young wives, as a rule, prize most highly the little shoes which been worn by their husbands at some re-mote period. Mothers esteem those which have seen service at the hands, or rather at the feet, of their children. The more shabby and dilapidated the little relic the more valuable.

A shoe with all the buttons missing, if it can be proved that they were worn off or lost by its original owner, is very much more prized than a spick and span little shoe which has never seen any very violent service.

The little shoes, which really have no in-

trinsic value, are usually considered price less by these very prejudiced collectors.

Lean Pup-"What's the matter, Fido. you're looking very fat?" Round Pup-"I bit a pneumatic tire!"-Pearson's Weekly.



THROUGH BIG DRIFTS

Rotary Plows Are a Great Blessing to Western Railroads.

TOSS THE SNOW HIGH IN THE AIR

Were It Not for Them Travel Would Be Suspended.

BATTLING WITH BLIZZARDS

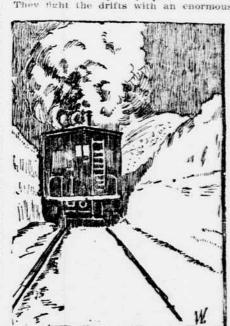


of its kind that can sweep over the plains.

railroads are mere toys beside the big had passed, clearing the way. mammoth of the prairie. They vary in size from the little scraper, which is only intended to clean the snow from the rails the train creeps along no faster than an and which is hardly larger than an ordi- active man can walk, and where there is nary cow catcher, up to the great iron nothing to look out upon but the white, shield, in shape not unlike the prow of a treeless expanse, or at the white walls of battleship and mounted on trucks, that is the cut that are so close the car rocks pushed by one, two or even more engines, and that literally "bunts" its way through drifts, piling up the white banks to the right and left. Powerful as this machine time unit at last they are higher than the is, a good-sized western drift would quickly stall it, but it usually meets all the re-our ements of the eastern and central most vertical walls shut out the light, quirements of the eastern and central states, where a drift four or five feet deep will tie up traffic for perhaps a few hours or if the storm that brings it is unexpected and the roads unprepared to meet the situ-ation, for a night or day at most. It is absolutely useless on the plains of the northwest, where the snow accumulates in constantly deepening stratas all winter

Has Solved the Problem.

In the winter of 1881-2, before the invention of the rotary snow plow, the principal lines of South Dakota were practically blockaded from January to May, All traffic was at a standstill. Nothing like this has happened since the rotary plow came into use. It has successfully solved the prob-lem of winter railroading in the northwest. Now on the rain lines of the various roads that can be counted properly equipped two or three days is the limit to a tie-up, no matter how heavy the fall of snow. The villages along the counter the counter of the c matter how heavy the fall of snow. The villages along the small branch lines, however, count themselves lucky if they are dug out of the drifts once every thirty days. The rotary snow ploy is technically known as "the centrifugal plow," to distinguish it from the wedge-shaped plow in use on the eastern roads. It is a new ap-plication of an old principle rather than a new invention. The latest plows built of this description are huge affairs, weighing fifty tons and upward, unmounted; with trucks and engine the weight is double that of the plow proper.



wheel, twelve feet in diameter, and having oblique cutting flanges. This wheel re-volves like the screw propeller of a steamship, and driven by a powerful engine cuts its way into and through the snow banks. There are holes between the flange through which the snow passes, in what is known as "chips." It is taken up by a large fan elevator that throws it off on either side of the track. It forms one con-tinuous stream and is frequently thrown as high as the tops of the telegraph poles

and falls fifty or one hundred feet away from the edges of the cut. Disposing of the Snow.

The flanges on the wheel can be adjusted at any angle or can be turned either way, while the elevator is reversible, and the shower of snow may be sent either to the right or left of the track. The advantages of this arrangement are that the snew can be disposed of with reference to the direction from which the wind is blowing, an important consideration, for thus the one element that has had most to do with

forming the drifts is made to play a part in their removal.

The wheel and the engine that keep it re-The wheel and the engine that keep it revolving rest upon heavy trucks. There is also a cab for the engineer and his men. The cumbrous machine is moved along the track by means of powerful freight engines. In the way it breaks follows a repair and supply train, with tools, provisions and an extra gang of laborers, comfortably housed, for the big wheel must be kept revolving night and day—erupting its volcano of snew and ice—as long as the drifts remain to block traffic.

The plow, engine and truck have an ag-

NE OF THE INteresting sights of a winter in the northwest is a rotary

NE OF THE INTERESTINATION OF THE INTERESTIN snow plow at work.

It is the one device of its kind that one of its kind that can fight the big drifts formed by the almost constant winds that are dug, either because more snow is fall-ing or because the wind is sweeping the sweep over the plains.
These drifts may be ten, fifteen or twenty feet high, and a hundred-ton rotary plow will bore through a drift of this sort at the rate of two miles or more an hour, leaving a vertical walled cut twelve feet wide in its wake.

The snow plows in use on the eastern The snow plows in use on the eastern twenty or thirty minutes after the plow

Between High Banks. Traveling is not very exhibarating where

against them as it swings from side to side on the cold, creaking rails, and these walls rise foot by foot as the winter advances s of the cars. In the deepest cuts it is most vertical walls shut out the light However, even such travel is infinitely better than no travel at all and in very severe winter than is, when the snows are more than hard if heavy, as the cuts are opens, we it three trains are "rushed" through the another before they close up. ? or more of these rotary plows are kep at work on the main lines of the Chicago and Northwestern road in South Dakota from the middle of January middle of March at an expense to the com-pany of about \$200,000. These plows, big and powerful as they are, do not have things all their own way. In the soft banks which they attack may be fallen telegraph poles or the frozen carcasses of horses or cows. When the big wheel encounters an obstacle of this sort its flanges



try the fewer the cuts and fills the better, even when doing without them means sharp grades and short curves. The cuts simply invite the snow to lodge where it is hardest to handle. Consequently the more recently constructed roads in the Dakotas were put down with just as few cuts as possible. For the most part they follow the natural lay of the land to a surprising extent.
Since horses have ceased to be of any

particular value in the west they have come to be a factor in the difficulties that beset the railroad man in the winter months. Their owners turn them loose to hustle for themselves; bunches of these half-starved animals wander into the cuts where they end on the level plains, perhaps because of the shelter afforded from the wind, and trot along the track in advance of the trains, and in comparative safety, as to run them down would mean risking being derailed. The engineer can only fol-low along slowly until the hotses leave the track of their own second.

Preparedness.

From Puck. We don't want to fight, But, by jingo! if we do, We've coin to pay for ships and men, And investigations, too!

THE EDUCATION OF MR. PIPP. (Copyright, 1898, Life Publishing Company.)



Mr. Pipp finds in Viola, Lady Fitzmaurice, a sympathetic listener. She is much affected by the story of his early life.